

HOW ABOUT MOM

THE HONEST MOTHER – BOOK

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Content

The honest mother book

Anna 11

Frederic 12

1. Preparing for the maternity period 14

Becoming a mother 18

The maternity period 20

A maternity plan 24

Postpartum care 30

Nutrition in maternity 36

Momtalk: Japke Janneke Sybesma 42

2. The maternity period 48

Your baby's needs 52

Your physical recovery 60

A roller coaster of emotions 68

Maternity after cesarean section 74

Looking back on your delivery 80

When do you seek help? 84

Momtalk: Teske the Creator 88

3. Breastfeeding 94

The base 98

First aid for breastfeeding 110

Pumping and breast milk storage 116

Momtalk: Nadia Palesa Poeschmann 122

4. The new you 128

Your 'new' body 132

Conflicting emotions 138

Momtalk: Amber Girelle 144

5. Relationships 150

From lovers to parents and back 154

Family 160

Family Life 164

Momtalk: Kimberley Klaver 170

6. Sleep (or lack thereof) 176

First aid for sleep deprivation 180

Your baby's sleep behavior 186

Momtalk: Florine Stoop Hofstee 192

7. Sex and intimacy 198

The first time after childbirth 202

Biology lesson 206

Intimacy 210

Momtalk: Jaleesa Clows 214

8. Work 220

Back to work 224

The eternal search for balance 230

Distribution at home 236

Momtalk: Chloé Chanté Leenheer 240

9. Taking care of yourself 246

Exercise and relaxation 250

Starting sports 256

Healthy food 262

The importance of self-care 266

Momtalk: Sigourney Kemper 270

10. Is this normal? 276

Frequently Asked Questions 280

Epilogue 291

Momtalk: Demi van Wijngaarden 292

Momtalks previous editions 298

Favorites 300
Experts 304
Thank you 307
Index 308

The honest mother book

How nice that you bought or received this book. Perhaps you know us from the honest mother app, our social media or do you have somewhere Heard or read about How About Mom. What we shared sharing is a need for honest and reliable information about everything that comes your way when you become a mother. That was for us the reason for starting How About Mom and the most important motivation for this book. The Honest Mother Book.

By the end of your pregnancy, practically speaking, you are often well prepared on the arrival of a baby. Especially if it's your first child. We run outfitting lists and make sure we have all the essential items for a *newborn* in have at home. Also those twenty (!) hydrophilic cloths. You might read a book, take a course and hear - solicited or unsolicited - the childbirth stories of other women.

What you just don't prepare for, if at all, is what is going to happen to *you* happening. To childbirth, recovering from childbirth. To all the emotions That you will experience. To all the first times you will go through as a mother. The birth of a child also means the birth of a mother. That Becoming a mother is a wonderful, unforgettable and challenging process. Not only in those first days or weeks as a new mother - in which it sometimes seems like being on an emotional roller coaster - but also in the months that follow. Your will begin to experience as a mother how sometimes you simply need a break from everything need, but at the same time don't want to miss a second. How you sometimes have to deal with can think back wistfully to the time when you were without a diaper bag and sleep schedule spent the days, and at the same time you couldn't live a life without your child(ren) can and do imagine. How one moment you can doubt *everything*, and motherhood comes so naturally to you at other times. As if you've never done anything else.

Any way you slice it: in addition to all the experiences that motherhood fantastic, challenges also come your way. In the maternity period, you will you marvel at what is going on physically and mentally and wonder: Why didn't *anyone* tell me this beforehand! You'll be home, with a partner or alone, have to find your niche. You will get used to all the new care duties and responsibilities. And all in a very A lot less sleep than before.

No one can prepare you for what it is really like to become a mother. That you will simply begin to experience. This book is here for you: it is your guide during the maternity period and the first year as a mother. You can use it to prepare for prepare for what is to come, or to fall back on when you have questions during this special stage in your life. Perhaps not everything in this book will are applicable to you. You can decide for yourself what you want to read and use. If we can give you one thing, it's that you never have to think That you are the only one who experiences or feels something a certain way. That it is not talked about freely does not mean it is not there. We are all human beings. Even the happiest mothers are sometimes insecure, anxious Or dead tired. You may feel lonely if you think you are the only one. Only when we dare to talk about our experiences, concerns or doubts, will you find that many more expectant and new mothers find themselves in your story recognize.

We also want you to know that you should never be ashamed. Not for certain thoughts or emotions, not for your changing body. Not for the fact That you are eager to go back to work, not if you would rather be home instead stay. Not when you have to get used to motherhood, and not when everything around you is around you can be stolen since you are a mother. As far as we are concerned, you are how then also a *superwoman*.

Have you downloaded the How About Mom app yet? This iOS and Android app contains more than 250 articles, a handy symptom checker, courses, sports and relaxation exercises, specially developed for new mothers. In this book, you will find QR codes that you can scan with your smartphone. If you have the How About Mom app installed have, by scanning the QR code you come directly at the right course. Our experts will help you understand when starting breastfeeding, again safely exercising after childbirth, or with a meditation or relaxation exercise in your busy life.

Anna

When I think back to the first few weeks as a new mother, I think of
A lovely smelling baby sleeping like a heap on my chest.
To hours of watching my little daughter in wonder. I remember how
fast time went by - you blink and the maternity period is over - and at the same time
sometimes agonizingly slow. By the amount of cups of coffee I
drunk cold, how often in the shower I still have a baby's
thought to hear crying. How proudly I walked behind the stroller for the first time,
Or breastfeeding my daughter for the first time somewhere along the way. To the nipple
fissures,
the maternity dressings and the mornings when I wondered if I would spend the night
before that had slept at all.
Becoming a mother is an amazing experience, one I would never want to miss.
It is wonderful to be able to witness a child growing up.
Becoming a mother is also intense and overwhelming. It is re-learning yourself
knowing, doing much more on less sleep, an ultimate form of learning to let go.
Whatever mother you speak to, be it a friend, colleague or other
mother is in the park, *all* can name something we hadn't
expected from motherhood. Things that made us in that first year as a mother
have overwhelmed or surprised us. Whether that is physical
recovery after childbirth, relationship with your partner, work, emotions or
sex. It's time for more openness on all these topics. That's where
we stand for. We want to start a movement with How About Mom.
More time and attention to the postpartum period. Taboo topics
discuss and keep it that way. And encourage mothers to from time
make a priority for themselves as well.
I hope How About Mom is a place where we can see women of all shapes and
mates praise and where we support each other. Where we also discuss the awkward or
embarrassing
sides discuss and provide space for all the emotions that
come with becoming a mother, beyond the "Instagrammable" side
Of motherhood. All the wonderful highs, all the honest challenges.

X Anna

Want to see more from Anna? Follow her on Instagram.
annajacobs

Frederieke

About baby room decor, best rompers for a newborn and flight case packing lists is plenty of practical information, I noticed during my pregnancy. To the questions I thought about myself - about how I was going to combine motherhood and work, for example, how your body looks like after giving birth, and how becoming a parent changes your relationship - I found much less reliable and useful information about that.

We were missing an honest book that could serve as a guide for expectant mothers. Whether it's your first child, or you've been a mom for longer. That's why we this honest mom book.

During my pregnancy, another thing struck me. As a pregnant woman, you have a special status. We honor and praise the pregnant body, photographing it and have collective admiration for it. What happens to that powerful and beautiful female body *after* birth? Why is there a social pressure to go "back" to your old body, to get 'back in shape' again? Why do women ask each other if their old jeans fit them again, rather than how they experience motherhood? Instead of that focus on our bodies, let's talk even more about What makes motherhood so complex, challenging, overwhelming and unforgettable can make. And let's pay tribute to the mother body.

Even though I was well prepared, I was overwhelmed by the ferocity Of all the emotions in the maternity weeks. Those unforgettable first days, high of hormones, in which I sometimes couldn't catch sleep and stared at the ceiling stared as the new reality dawned on me. We are parents. I am mother. From now on, life will never be the same.

Thank you for choosing this book. I hope it inspires you, lets laugh and cheer you up when you need it for a moment. I hope this book will help your anxious

Or helps reduce negative thoughts. That it reduces any uncertainty about your new body after childbirth can take away, by the pictures of real women's bodies, in all shapes and sizes. And I hope this book realizes that we belong to the same club. To the same great group of women. The strongest, most resilient, caring and *awesome* group that helps create tomorrow's world: mothers.

X Frederieke

Want to see more from Frederieke? Follow her on Instagram.
frederiekejacobs

Honest advice

of postpartum treatment

Virginie Mennes - van Daalen Buissant

1.

Think about your recovery. New mothers think about everything up to delivery, while that time afterwards is so important for you and your baby. Forget not that you are the most important person in your baby's care, together with your possible partner, and that you want to be in good physical and mental shape are to experience motherhood.

2.

Dare to be honest about your feelings after childbirth. Discuss with your maternity nurse, partner, midwife or friends how you experienced everything or experiences. You may be honest and open about the overwhelming feelings of early motherhood, the absence or not always experiencing that pink cloud. You are not alone in your feelings. By sharing these feelings, you can ease tensions let go and hopefully you will start to feel better.

3.

Stay close to yourself. No matter how many books, stories or experiences you read or hears from others, you and your feelings are the main guide in everything what you're doing. You got this far for a reason. Without your own intuition, feelings and ideas you would not have gotten where you are today.

The arrival of your baby will have a big impact on your life. You will need time to get used to this. Just like you have to get used to the broken nights, the maternity nurse in your home and your belly suddenly empty again is. Don't forget that the hormones in your body also have an impact on how you feel. This is another reason why it is so important to take it easy and take time to process everything. Enjoy your cup of tea in bed, let those vacuum especially nice and have an extra meal delivered once.

It is perfectly normal that in those first few weeks you sometimes fly back and forth in terms of emotions. All of a sudden you are a mom and bear the responsibility for a baby. You as a new mother will begin to experience how sometimes you simply need a break from everything, but at the same time don't need a second want to miss. How one moment you can doubt *everything*, and motherhood you come off so naturally at other times. As if you never did anything else have done.

Be realistic in the expectations you have of yourself and restrain yourself of comparing yourself to other moms or women around you.

Don't be rushed by top models who are already three weeks after giving birth posing in their bikini. For example, did you know that your uterus alone has six weeks to return to its original size? Also, the rest of your body may be given time to recover from the pregnancy and the delivery.

We cannot prepare you for how you experience becoming a mother emotionally is going to experience. It's very personal. Exactly how your maternity period will go, you can't fully prepare for that either. What we can do is to help you start thinking about what you need to take good care of yourself. Take care of yourself. Because if you take good care of yourself, you are also able to take good care of caring for your newborn baby.

The first six weeks after giving birth is called the maternity period. So the maternity period goes a few more weeks, even if the days when you received maternity care at home are over. An awful lot happens during this period. Therefore, it is just important that you take all the time you need to recover quietly and get used to it to this new situation.

Originally, the maternity bed lasted ten days. This used to mean that you were not allowed to get out of bed for ten days. Nowadays, it's more of an exception if we as new mothers are *not* out of bed after a few days come. Perhaps in the first or second week you make your first walk outside with the stroller. At most five minutes down the street and down waddling with a huge maternity bandage in your sweatpants, but *Hey*: not in bed so.

How quickly you have energy to get out of bed after childbirth depends on many factors: the health of your baby, the intensity of labor, a possible cesarean section or much blood loss at or after delivery. All of those issues affect how you feel in those first few weeks.

Ten days of bed rest is far from realistic for all mothers. Yet this is recommended for a reason. It is important for your recovery to lie down a lot, rest and spend time in bed. In doing so, you actually relieve your pelvic floor, on which a lot of force has been put during childbirth. By standing upright, gravity works on your pelvic floor muscles. As a result the recovery of your vagina, perineum and anus may take longer. Try the first days and weeks a lot of lying in bed or on the couch, taking naps and also sleep when your baby is asleep.

The fourth trimester

Postpartum means "after childbirth. In many countries and cultures, there is a specific period after birth in which care for the mother is central

state. Compared to our Dutch approach, postpartum care is of the maternity woman in other cultures much more extensive than the eight days of maternity care common here. In countries without maternity care or maternity leave, there are traditions to provide good caring for the newly delivered woman. This period is also called the fourth trimester, called *the Golden Month of the Sacred Window*. These weeks or months are seen as a crucial transition phase, during which visitation is limited or even barred, and there is dedicated help and care is for the mother. All daily care tasks such as cooking, washing and cleaning are taken out of the mother's hands so that she can fully focus on the most important task: her recovery and bonding with the baby. But that postpartum care goes far beyond just completing practical tasks. Surrounded by other women from the family or community new mothers are massaged, cared for and honored in traditional ways. In Korea, for example, the postpartum period lasts a minimum of twenty-one and ideally thirty days. New mothers receive several times a day *miyeok guk*, a seaweed-based soup topped with steak, chicken or anchovies, intended to gain physical strength and stimulate milk production. Mothers in Indonesia drink *jamu*: a mix of ginger, palm sugar, tamarind and "healing herbs. In Moroccan culture, the maternity woman is sacred. Cooking and bringing food, cleaning the house, taking care of older children: in the seven days after delivery, everything is often done for her, but family and friends also stood by her and the family in the following weeks. In Spanish-speaking countries, the period after childbirth is called *la cuarentena*, literally the quarantine, and becomes a new mother for a period of forty days cared for. In Mexico, the woman's maternity period with a four hour ceremony concluded. In the process, the woman is physically and mentally cared for with a massage, a hot bath with special herbs and wrapping with rebozos, special Mexican cloths, as a ritual to surround her body to "close" again after delivery.

Rest and recovery

Seaweed soup, an herbal bath or a closing ritual sounds Dutch mothers may seem a bit strange to the ears. With our down-to-earth Western approaches-mentality we don't always give enough thought to the care that a brand-new mother needs. Where it is in the countries and cultures that this knowing habits is all about not only being there for the baby but also for the new mother is taken care of.

In addition to the three trimesters of your pregnancy, you will enter a fourth trimester *after* childbirth. It is a nice thought to use the period after childbirth as a to see a period of rest and transition. A period to get used to, so good possible to recover and give yourself rest. In those first weeks and months After birth, the foundations are laid that your health and that of your child can positively affect the rest of your lives.

Leave out general notions of "how things should be done" and choose what works for you. It's your maternity time, so do the things where your body relaxes from and what makes you happy and relaxed. Physical, emotionally and socially, a lot is changing. Those first few weeks can be quite overwhelming. That's why it's important to be in the take adequate rest. The more rest you allow yourself, the faster you are recovering from childbirth, that immense achievement you have made.

This is exactly what we wish for you as a new mother: care and attention for you as a woman. However you want to set up the maternity period.

Of course, you can't predict right now exactly how the maternity period will go.

Still, it is wise to think in advance about what you consider important in the

first days and weeks after birth. How do you want to deal with maternity visitors?

What brings you peace and relaxation? How do you make sure you keep it nice together?

Take time to think about this, either by yourself or with your partner.

Your wishes for the maternity period

What many new mothers giving birth encounter is that they struggle with setting boundaries. Feeling the need to please other people.

make. For example, by allowing more or quicker maternity visits than feels good or than you are comfortable with. In doing so, there is a good chance that you will find that your own

needs pass. Perhaps during maternity you become so overwhelmed through everything, that you don't think at all about what you yourself need. Or what you actually prefer yourself.

In a maternity or postpartum plan you can write down what your wishes are for the maternity period. It is recommended that you make this plan during your pregnancy

and write it before the 37th week. Making a maternity plan helps you to think about how you can take good care of yourself and can be a fine hold on are for the maternity nurse. She can provide care in your home as well as possible to suit your needs.

You choose the topics you want to include in your maternity plan. Discuss for each topic how you envision it, and ask your partner how he

Whether she looks at this. Are you on the same page, or do you view some things differently? Write your wishes and expectations for the maternity period in this paper or digital maternity plan. You can use your maternity plan during the intake interview

with the maternity nurse in advance. Have you given birth?

Draw the maternity nurse's attention to your plan, placing it near the changing pad, for example

down. She can quietly read up on your expectations of the maternity period. What are things you can name in a maternity plan?

Maternity Visit

After the birth, many people will want to come and admire the baby. The One mother looks forward immensely to receiving visits, while the other not to think about it just yet. How do you deal with maternity visits? That you determine.

For example, you may choose to enjoy one, two or three weeks first of your new family, and only then invite family and friends.

Or invite only the immediate family at first, and only after several weeks asking friends, acquaintances or colleagues for a maternity visit. You can also organize a baby party or get-together, in order to get a group of people at once showing your baby.

You don't have to send the birth announcements all at once. For example, you can send your closest friends or family a card first, and later send a larger group to send a card.

Especially if it is your first child, you are probably tempted to give things a somewhat over you. Know that you always have a choice and that you can you should never feel obligated to let people into your home if you do not ready for it. Whatever you decide: all is well, as long as you listen to your feeling listens and stays true to it.

Do a daily check-in

Agree with your partner to "check in" at a set time during the day with each other. For example, in the morning. Discuss how you are feeling and if you are having the

sees fit to have visitors. Sometimes you're too tired, not having a good day or just no sense. Canceling visits is no objection. If your head or your body is not there to state, you may even cancel the visit on the day. Most people will understand that. Your baby isn't going anywhere and is still equally small, so meeting two or three weeks later is no problem at all.

Agree on a maximum time with your visit. A maternity visit of up to Thirty minutes is not crazy at all. You can also agree on a stop word with your partner, and withdraw to go rest or feed. Realize that what you think of beforehand can feel very different the moment your baby is once there, so gauge every day with each other what you feel and think.

Time for yourself

Days with a baby can fly by. You may not even have time to take a shower. How can you still have mini moments of relaxation for yourself create? For example, through a massage, a short meditation or a warm shower? Think about that in advance. And what does your partner needed to support you properly?

Help

To whom do you dare entrust the care of your baby when you need a break need? Which people can you ask for help, such as a meal or help with housework or baby care?

It is wise to think about this before the maternity weeks, and enlisting your family, friends or neighbors. Who does the shopping, the housekeeping and cooking during the maternity period? Also consider paid services, such as having extra food delivered once, a grocery shopping service or help When cleaning or doing laundry. If you consider ahead of time that you are here want to take advantage of, it can be nice to set aside some money in advance. Above all, don't forget to prepare some dishes in the weeks before you give birth. freeze. Soups, curries and pasta sauces lend themselves well to this. Fresh, homemade meals are also perfect maternity gifts to give to family or ask friends when they come to visit you at your maternity home.

Baby care

In your maternity plan, you can also include your wishes about caring for the baby. Do you want to breastfeed? To wean or not to wean? What are your wishes when it comes to sleeping or crying? How often do you want to bathe the baby do? How will you do it at night? Do you think it's important in the first few days of regular skin-to-skin contact with your baby?

If you already have a baby, it is also smart to think about how you will spend the first weeks to start holding the rhythm in his or her life. How is the care or with your mothering days, if you suddenly have a baby and a child at home have? Who arranges pick-up and drop-off to daycare or school, and who takes take the eldest out for an afternoon once in a while?

Social media

Depending on your own social media usage and that of those around you, it is smart to discuss before the baby arrives what you will do with the online world want to share, on what platform and when you want to announce it. It is not strange to ask family or friends if they would like to wait with your publicly congratulating you or sharing photos or messages until your themselves have disclosed anything online. No matter how many cute pictures of you and your newborn are made during the maternity visit, let your friends, colleagues or family members know that they should take it easy for a while longer with their Instagram Stories or WhatsApp messages. It is wise to let your partner engage: he or she can help monitor this.

The most important thing when writing a maternity plan is that you choose what for feels right to you. Everyone has different needs when it comes to maternity time. There is no right or wrong as long as you make choices that suit you.

Checklist

Create your own maternity plan

In a maternity plan, you put your wishes and preferences. Questions that you can ask of yourself and each other are, for example:

What does the ideal maternity period look like for you?

What are your wishes or expectations about the maternity nurse?

When will you notify family and friends of the birth

Of your baby? When do you want to send the birth announcement card?

How do you want to handle maternity visits? Who may visit and when

And what does that visitation look like?

Do you also dare to cancel or postpone maternity visits if it's a bit less going on?

To whom do you dare entrust the care of your baby when you are need a break, for example?

Who can you ask for help, such as to bring a meal, help with housework or baby care?

Who will do the shopping, housekeeping and cooking during the maternity period?

How do you want to handle social media? Are family or maternity visitors allowed to do anything

Share on Facebook or Instagram?

Did you know that the Netherlands is the only country in the world where "maternity care" exists?

Nowhere in the world do you get someone at home after giving birth to take care of you and helps get through that first week with your baby. Many parents know not what they would do without their maternity nurse. Trust us, you're not the only one to shed a tear when you bid her goodbye for the last time.

The maternity nurse or maternity nurse has three main tasks: the care of the baby and guide the parents in it, the care from the mother and help with light housework. That assistance with household ranges from changing beds to buttering biscuits with mice For the maternity visit.

In both a home birth and most hospital births, the maternity nurse present. She offers the midwife support during delivery and takes care of you and the baby immediately after delivery. When you may go home with your little one, the maternity nurse will come often with you. She then comes for a few hours to help you get started with nutrition, making the crib and answering your first questions about caring for your baby. Your maternity nurse will then make arrangements for the upcoming

seven to 10 days several hours a day in your home. Know

That you can also talk to your maternity nurse about your delivery, settling in To motherhood or your fluctuating emotions. You are certainly not the first or only one to share her emotions, questions or concerns. Your maternity nurse is there also, and precisely, for these things.

Your midwife will come in the first eight days after birth on average visit you three times. The first time is within 24 hours of delivery or after home from the hospital, depending on the time of day. The first and second visit are mostly centered on the delivery. It is nice to talk about be able to talk about your delivery and ask any questions about it.

In addition to the health of the baby, your health and physical recovery is also closely monitored. During the maternity period, the maternity nurses do and midwife some physical checkups with you. For example the size of your uterus is checked by tugging at your abdomen. feel and your blood loss is monitored. Also, often your body temperature and blood pressure measured. Should you have stitches after delivery, then the maternity nurse or midwife can remove the stitches

check and give tips on how to care for them.

Checklist

Choosing maternity care: what to look out for?

Postpartum maternity care must be requested by yourself. Recommended is to do this when you are about 12 weeks pregnant, and before you are 20 weeks pregnant. What to look out for When choosing a maternity care organization?

It is smart to choose a maternity care organization in your area: that way the maternity nurse can be in your home quickly.

Do you want one permanent maternity nurse? Smaller maternity care agencies work sometimes with one permanent maternity nurse for the entire period. At larger organizations, it is possible that you may have several maternity nurses sees during your maternity week.

Ask about the experiences of friends, family and colleagues who have already have children.

If you are religious or value certain values, know

That there are maternity care organizations that can meet your needs.

There are Christian and Muslim maternity homes, for example.

You can also choose a maternity care organization that offers natural or offers anthroposophic maternity care.

Don't feel comfortable with the maternity nurse during the maternity period?

Then indicate to her what you would like to see different. If that doesn't help, ask

Then ask the maternity care facility for another maternity nurse.

Supporting your belly

In the first few days after giving birth, you may experience an empty feeling in your belly. You After all, the belly is "empty": the baby is out, as are the placenta and all the amniotic fluid.

Your organs have shifted somewhat out of place because of your growing belly.

Slowly the organs are coming back into place. Your uterus, abdominal muscles and pelvic floor suffered quite a lot during childbirth.

Therefore, it may be nice to have extra support for your abdomen, pelvis and back, with a locking strap, rebozo cloth or *bellybind*.

The closing sheet or closing band has slowly disappeared in recent decades,

but was used extensively by our grandmothers' generation. It is a

tight band, providing support for the pelvis, abdomen and back. The closing sheet

is worn around the abdomen to ensure that all organs and your

oblique and straight abdominal muscles return to their former positions more easily.

Maybe it's for you, maybe not: some women find

Being constricted in such a tight locking band nothing. High, elastic underpants

put on in the first few days after giving birth can also help to keep your

uterus and abdominal muscles some support and give you a sense of

Of giving security.

In many Eastern cultures, *belly binding* is an important postpartum tradition.

Tummy tucking can provide women with mental and physical support

give after childbirth. A long piece of fabric is made in a special way

wrapped around the torso from the pelvis to the sternum. Abdominal Tying

can help with postpartum recovery by pulling the abdominal muscles together

bring the organs back into place, and prevent fluid accumulation

to go. Such a constricted belly can also strengthen women mentally, as

they experience a less "empty" feeling in their stomach and feel less vulnerable feel.

You can use a woven cotton scarf or a wide cotton cloth

To tie in your belly. Secure the end of the cloth with safety pins.

You can find videos and instructions via the Internet. Make sure the

belly band sits securely without cutting, and that the pressure is evenly distributed everywhere

is. We recommend you see a postpartum counselor, postpartum doula or

seek massage therapist who specializes in belly binding or tummy tucks. Often after instruction from a specialist, you can do it at home do it yourself.

Postpartum massage

Perhaps during your pregnancy you had a special pregnancy massage had. Did you know that there are also postpartum massages specifically to help you as a newly delivered woman to care for and support? Your body has that care and attention is desperately needed at this very moment.

Such a postpartum massage has two important functions: it provides relaxation and relief of your aching body and it supports your (emotional) recovery. Postpartum massage often involves the use of relaxing oils, cloths or heat pads. You can as a new mom immediately feel more relaxation and less pain. The effect of a Postpartum massage goes even further. In fact, with massage you increase circulation and provide faster removal of excess fluid and wastes. It can additionally have a positive effect on your hormone regulation And your milk production.

An outfitting list for new moms

Rompers, hot water bottles and hydrophilic cloths: for the baby, you probably have everything in

gotten home or at least your shopping list is ready. But do you also have thought about what you yourself will need after childbirth?

You may not be able to imagine it now, but with a small baby you can look at the clock at four and realize: I'm still in pajamas. And that doesn't matter. With a nice pajama or house suit, you have a nice outfit to in to chill at home. With a kimono or morning coat, you can put on something Should maternity visitors come and you want to feel a little more dressed up. For the first few days after delivery, you can't avoid maternity pads, but it's not really comfortable. Especially not if you try to use maternity pads wear in "normal" underwear.... Most maternity packages include net pants, you can also buy them at baby stores or online. Sometimes you get also wear one in the hospital or with them. These bottoms ensure that the maternity dressing stays in place. Mesh pants are specially Recommended after a cesarean section because they are breathable (great for stitches) but they are actually recommended for all new moms. In Instead of mesh pants, you can also choose regular, large underpants. After giving birth, you will have several weeks of blood loss. If the maternity dressing gives way to sanitary pads after a few days, it is nice to choose a cotton variety so it won't fester or irritate.

In the first weeks after birth, do not use strong-smelling deodorant, perfume or body lotion. Your natural scent is important and recognizable for your baby, it helps him or her find your breasts and gives a safe sensation. So preferably choose a deodorant without perfume. Also, it is smart To avoid deodorant spray if you are breastfeeding, so your baby can does not inhale chemicals.

One more in the line of personal care: a good dry shampoo.

Ideal when maternity visitors are at the door, or you don't have a have time (or desire!) for an extended shower session. A fresh cut without That you need to get out of your maternity bed.

The maternity nurse will help you in the first days to get enough each day to to eat. Because you won't be the first mom who doesn't get around to eat, or just forget about it in all the hustle and bustle. While your body is in full is recovering, making proper nutrition and adequate energy crucial. During the first few days after giving birth, you may feel less like have in heavy food. This is normal because your body is recovering. Once milk production gets going, your cravings often return. It may well

be that you are then even more hungry than usual: with breastfeeding give you quickly burn an extra 200 to 500 calories a day. If you choose not to breastfeed, listen to your body just as much.

Sushi, a carpaccio roll or smoked salmon: after pregnancy, you can finally Eat again everything you had to miss for nine months. Enjoy everything What you can eat again now. Pamper yourself, you more than deserve it! Apple Pie, chocolate, desserts or one more round of biscuits: even if these are usually may not be the healthiest options, in the maternity weeks this is totally okay. Treat yourself to something sweet.

Warm and nourishing

Avoid cold and raw foods in the first few weeks, as this will cause your body to is more difficult to process. Hot, cooked meals are in the maternity weeks easier for your intestines to digest. Think vegetable curries, stews, soup, oatmeal or other hot dishes. Meal soup can be are a good way to get vegetables, moisture and fiber, for example a lentil soup, pumpkin soup or pea soup.

Healthy and nourishing foods are sweet potatoes, pumpkin, grains such as basmati rice, quinoa and brown rice and (cooked) oatmeal.

Vitamins and iron

During pregnancy and after delivery, it is important to keep your iron levels in keeping your blood level. Did you lose a lot of blood in childbirth? Pregnant women and breastfeeding women are at risk of iron deficiency.

Take extra vitamins or a dietary supplement with iron, available As a tablet or in liquid form. Apple syrup, beef and steak are iron-rich foods. Foods such as bread and whole grain products, legumes, dried apricots, nuts and dark green vegetables such as purslane, pak choi, endive and chard also contain iron.

Are you breastfeeding? Take extra vitamins or a dietary supplement with vitamin D if you are breastfeeding to prevent vitamin D deficiency.

Drink enough

Drink plenty, such as water, (herbal) tea or tempered lemonade.

Put a pitcher of water and a healthy snack on your nightstand, so you - even At night while feeding - what to eat and drink.

Don't forget fat

Your body needs healthy fats. Eat plenty of good fats, which are for example, in olive oil, avocado and nuts. It is recommended that once per week to eat oily fish, such as salmon or sardines. Should you not eat fish, then there are also plant sources of omega 3 fatty acids such as flaxseed, flaxseed oil, rapeseed oil, walnuts (oil), soybean oil, chia seeds and hemp seeds. You can also choose omega 3 fish oil as a tablet or in liquid form.

Blockage prevention

It is not crazy at all if your bowels need to get going again after giving birth.

Make sure you drink enough: at least 1.5 to 2 liters a day. And try to eat high fiber, by eating whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, granola, flaxseed, legumes such as lentils and beans, and lots of vegetables and putting fruit on your menu. Also exercise, by getting out of bed for a while or from getting off the couch and stretching your legs can help prevent blockage.

Plan ahead

A tip for the first few days with baby: make when you prepare your breakfast, also prepare your lunch right away. For daytime, make a lunch box with sandwiches ready, or an easy snack you can eat in between. You can imagine little about it now, but sometimes you don't know where you get the time from must fetch with a newborn baby.

Cook ahead and freeze some meals during your pregnancy. This way you have a healthy meal on the table quickly in the maternity period. It is also a good

idea of asking your maternity visitors to bring a meal. Many friends and family will be happy to make and bring a meal for you. That saves you cooking, plus there's nothing like a dish made with love created by someone.

Your reserves

As mothers, we often worry about whether our baby is getting enough nutrients in. While it is just as important that during the maternity weeks you get enough nutrients, vitamins and minerals to recover. Do you have symptoms such as fatigue, lethargy and dejection, then also look at your diet and whether you are getting all the nutrients you need comes. Sometimes a deficiency in vitamins and minerals such as vitamin D, iron, magnesium, calcium and zinc also lead to physical or mental health problems. Your primary care physician, a dietician or orthomolecular therapist can help you with this.

Even if you were barely taking in energy and nutrients, the your body will continue to make breast milk. To do so, your reserves will be addressed. Compare it to your pregnancy, where your baby is in the uterus is still getting all the nutrients, even though you are getting through the pregnancy sickness no bite down your throat. You can keep your baby breastfeeding, even when you yourself have very little energy intake through your nutrition. But you run a great risk of drawing on your reserves and your body exhaust. Eating well helps you feel good about yourself. Especially now you have the care of a tiny person to go with it.

Checklist

for new moms

Breastfeeding

Nipple cream, preferably lanolin-based

Hydrogel pads

A nursing bra

Sucking pads

A feeding pillow

A breast pump

Your care

Natural care products, preferably without perfume

Roller deodorant, preferably not a spray or strongly scented

Netpants

Fine large underpants

Dry shampoo

Cotton maternity and sanitary pads

A fine pair of soft pajamas, kimono or bathrobe

Nutrition

Frozen meals in the freezer

High-fiber and laxative foods, such as prunes, kiwis and broken linseed

Iron-rich foods, such as red meat, apple syrup, egg, legumes

The things you've been looking forward to all your pregnancy

Vitamins and supplements, e.g. for iron deficiency

Handy to have in the house

Maternity Package

Bed risers

A water bottle or *peri bottle*, to rinse while urinating

A notebook, to write down your birthing story

If you plan to give birth at home, it is helpful to make sure you have the following items in your home.

Buckets, a plastic tub or wash bowl

Garbage bags

A flashlight plus batteries (in case of unexpected power failure)

Some old towels and a set of bedding (you'd prefer to have not liking it on your crisp-white new sheets)

A maternity mattress of the largest size or a plastic mattress pad (this is usually included in the maternity package)

Five extra mats (there are usually about five of these already in place as well mats in your maternity package)

Ten large sterile gauzes (of these there are usually a few already in place as well in your maternity package)

A pack of salt (to include bedding or towels after childbirth wash with it)

At least ten hydrophilic cloths

Two pitcher bags and jugs

Japke Janneke Sybesma ('91) is with boyfriend Kai, and in expecting her first child. The Haarlem-based influencer is avid athlete, content creator and coach. "I plan to be about continue to share my pregnancy. If I don't post anything more, I will be giving birth."

As an influencer, how do you actually go on leave?

I want to go on leave four to five weeks before the due date, which is means that I am temporarily discontinuing paid collaborations with companies and no longer have to supply content. Then I actually have free time. But I do want to stay online until labor starts, should I just feel well feeling. If I don't post anything more, I'm in labor, haha! I also find it very nice to see in other pregnant people how they experience that last period before the childbirth experience and what they go through. I really enjoy doing the same sharing, so I'll keep doing that as long as it feels right.

And have you thought about returning after your leave?

Should everything go as I hope it will, I will go quietly in the new year see how I feel. As an entrepreneur, I am flexible, I can easily work at different times. I want to let it depend a little bit on how the goes. I have a manager who helps me well. We review together when I feeling well enough to start again. I don't know how it all goes walking. My work is part of my personal life, so it's also part wait and see. I can say, however, that I will be partnering with a running brand for example, but maybe I'm nowhere near ready to run.

How did you feel about being pregnant?

I found dealing with the physical and mental changes during my pregnancy sometimes quite difficult. In those first few weeks, your body and feel different, even though you can't see anything on the outside yet. I found it troublesome that the outside world didn't see anything yet, but that my body was already so different reacted and felt.

I am someone who very much wants to have control over things in her life. Whereas pregnancy is actually an exercise in letting go and not-knowing. Your body is changing, you have no control over that. How your baby goes, you don't know either. I found that letting go a very big challenge. I find that letting go of control gets easier as the pregnancy progresses progresses. Meanwhile, I am in the last trimester. My belly is growing, people see clearly that I am pregnant, and so it is easier for me to realize and listen to my body better. I feel my little son every day. He is quite active. Those little kicks also give me confidence. Then I feel I can take a little more rest and be gentle with myself.

How do you look at your changing body?

I find my changed body hard to accept. I am honest about that over, which is explainable given my previous eating disorder and the uncertainty about my changing body. What I see a lot is that pregnant women are very proud of their bellies. Instagram and Facebook are full of beautiful images and maternity photo shoots. I found it early on in the pregnancy tricky that my body changed so quickly, I also didn't know That you got another belly so soon after the positive test. That overwhelmed me too, that it went so fast.

Has this pregnancy changed you?

I very much want to be in control of everything, and that's not possible. Not if you are pregnant, nor will they be when the baby arrives soon. Things happen where you have no control over, your baby determines what your day is like. That for me is going to be a become a learning experience. I already notice that in my pregnancy now, and somewhere it is

also nice to be confronted and practiced with that already.

Do you already have an idea for the maternity week?

I would prefer to stay in our own bubble those first few weeks. Many maternity visits can be very overwhelming, so we're going to take it very slowly do. You can't imagine beforehand what it's going to be like later with a newborn baby, but I do hear that it can be a very intense period.

We do want to prepare for that together.

How to deal with social media later, in maternity week and after that?

Kai does not like our son being recognizable in the picture. If our son is still a baby, I don't mind so much, but when he's a little older it feels also not good for me to have him pontifically in the picture on my social media bring. I'm sure pictures will come by, but not very many.

Our child cannot decide that for himself. We decide if he comes online

While he himself cannot choose. And I share that opinion of Kai, I do think it is understandable, even though my work partly consists of sharing my private life.

I think you can also create very nice content with child, without him

comes full circle. Especially when it comes to paid collaborations

around the baby or child, in doing so, it doesn't feel comfortable for me right now to taking my child's picture. Of course, that's different for everyone. And

Maybe someday we'll think differently, but we share this view now.

What are you most looking forward to when your little son will soon be here?

The little things. Just going into town together, going out for the first time. Every phase is surely going to be special. The first few weeks in which we will hopefully go Cocooning with a newborn baby. And how our little son is growing up into a little person with a mind of her own, who will talk and with whom you will have conversations

conduct, and that you can start showing the world. I'm looking forward to that immensely.

Do you already know when you want to pick up sports after the childbirth?

Working out is something I really enjoy doing, so I'm curious to know when I'll be back can begin. How will my recovery go soon? When will I be able to running? I think about that a lot. Again, I try to let go of this, you know not how your labor goes and how your pelvic floor recovers. The general advice is to wait to run for at least six months after the childbirth because your pelvic floor muscles really need time to recover. And I'm willing to wait for that. It becomes seeing where my body is up to and what it needs when the little one arrives soon.

What does seem nice to me is to start doing exercises to aid recovery.

Promote. Exercises for your pelvic floor muscles, walking, your get fitness back a little bit. There are all ways that can help yourself feel a little fit again.

How do you provide time for yourself now and later with baby?

For me, going outside is a nice moment for myself, being in nature.

It gives me peace of mind and relaxation. That may soon be what harder, but I hope I can still find those moments. I have the

lucky that I can create those moments for myself. That is a luxury of

Being my own boss is different from a workday at the office. I can also very well imagine taking your child to daycare and making time for yourself, as a parent.

What do you want to teach your children about loving yourself?

Of course, it is a fear of mine, that I am transferring my eating disorder to my children. I don't know if my son will be less sensitive to that than a daughter. What matters is that there is something behind an eating disorder.

I worked hard on that, to be able to deal with that.

I hope my child grows up knowing that he may and can be himself

are. He is good the way he is. I think that is the most important thing to go along with give.
Want to see more from Japke? Follow her on Instagram.
[@japkejanneke](#)

Honest advice

From obstetrician Djanifa da Conceicao

1.

Read books, watch YouTube videos, listen to podcasts about such things as breastfeeding, pumping, your baby's sleep patterns, developmental leaps, Introduce intestinal cramps or solid foods. Talk to other moms.

You will find that there is never one perfect way when it comes to parenting or care for your baby goes: apply what feels right for you.

2.

Chances are you will suffer from congestion even if you are not breastfeeding.

What can help then is a tight sports bra. Did you know that cooling pads can make with white cabbage leaves, or buy ready-made? In addition a cherry pit bag and a baby carrier or sling is your best friend when your little one is restless. I also advise women to avoid "laxative" foods such as plums, kiwis and Roosvicee Laxo in the house. The first few days after the childbirth, it may take some time for your bowel movements to get going again.

3.

Know that love for your baby is the most important factor in making your child happy make. Remember that you can always take intermediate steps if you find that something is overwhelms you. The fact that it doesn't all work out perfectly in one day has to make you accept. So don't make final decisions when you feel bad, but only after you've taken rest or slept a night.

The maternity period is a time of rest, and getting used to each other. Everything is new and are you doing for the first time: bathing your baby, swaddling him or putting him to sleep, breastfeeding, and comforting or soothing your baby. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but as a new mother, you will find that you learn quickly. When your baby is only a week old, it is difficult to get your baby's cries from one another. You do your best to interpret his body language in estimate, recognize when he is tired or perhaps a clean diaper needs. Practice makes perfect. You are going to gain more and more experience, you get to know your child better and better and sense what he or she needs.

Skin-to-skin contact

The maternity period is ideally a time for frequent and frequent cuddling. Skin-to-skin contact

with your baby is important, for you and your baby. We can not emphasize that enough. By exposing your baby as often as possible on your bare skin or on your partner's chest, you help the natural bond between building you and your baby.

Skin-to-skin contact makes your baby feel safe and protected. Babies need skin-to-skin contact so much that there is even a term for it exists: skin hunger. Your baby will experience less stress, cry less and be able to relax more if he or she has frequent skin-to-skin contact. Research shows that direct and frequent skin-to-skin contact enhances growth and development of your little one. It ensures better sleep patterns, it provides better immunity for your baby, and it promotes the milk production and helps in inducing drinking.

The hormone prolactin plays an important role in breastfeeding. Prolactin levels in your blood are increased by physical contact and through drinking at the breast. Therefore, skin-to-skin contact is between you and your baby is also so good for milk production. Through skin-to-skin contact, for example, by laying your child on your bare upper body under a blanket, you also stimulate the love and bonding hormones in your body.

A baby can't talk yet

Babies cry from the moment they are born. It is one of the ways in which they show what they need, for example, food, a clean diaper, sleep or proximity to mom or dad. There is not necessarily be discomfort or pain to cry: babies also "just cry" because they are have no other way to express themselves yet.

A baby cannot tell what is going on and why he or she is crying.

Therefore, it is important to watch your baby closely. This way you can detect the signals learn to recognize. Often the crying stops when you respond to the signals, at-example by feeding your baby, changing him, comforting him by rocking or holding them against you, or by putting your baby to bed on time. You can also try to prevent crying by keeping your baby with you a lot, for example, in a sling, and by creating more regularity and rest.

Is your baby hungry, hurting or sleeping? You and your partner are needed to be in your baby's

needs. Babies cannot comfort themselves yet. Babies want to be held and reassured, they want to feel that they are not being alone. Of course, you can find various parenting advice and books find, each with a slightly different perspective. Important to remember is this: you can never overindulge your newborn baby by giving him or her often to hold or cuddle with you. Your baby would rather not be anywhere else than close to you.

Crying is part of it

All babies cry. Some babies cry a little more than others. You now know

That this is a baby's way of communicating what he or she needs has. From birth until six to eight weeks of age, babies go more crying. At six to eight weeks of age, babies cry on average two to two and a half hours a day. After that, the number of hours that babies per day crying again decreases. Around three months, the crying time is one to one and a half hours a day.

So at two months, you may experience a spike in crying in your baby. This can be spicy for you as a mother, with little energy and sleepless nights. Please don't worry: crying is normal in babies. The crying diminishes on its own in the vast majority of babies. From four months babies are more interested in their surroundings. They can more easily communicate and connect. So this gives babies more opportunities to express themselves, and the crying decreases.

Bowel Cramps

A baby's intestines are still very sensitive. They can be affected by the food quickly become irritable. Intestinal cramps occur in almost all babies, the One baby suffers more than the other. Intestinal cramps occur both when breast- and bottle-fed, often when your baby is two to three weeks old, with a peak around six weeks. In many babies, the colic disappears after three to four months. Most babies have the first few weeks mostly Evening cramps.

Checklist

Calming your baby

Look and listen carefully to your baby. Try his or her body signals recognize. That way you'll know what's going on faster.

What can you do to soothe your baby? There are several things you can try to reduce crying:

A sling can be a fine way to soothe your baby. Many babies enjoy being carried in a sling or baby carrier.

Music, humming or singing can also soothe your baby. There are apps and videos with which you can set up a monotone sound (*white noise*),

often babies become calmer from this. *Trust us*, you're not the first to turns on a two-hour YouTube video with a vacuum cleaner sound.

Laying your baby on their side or tummy: this can be especially nice when your baby is intestinal cramps. In a side or tummy position, lay your baby on your forearm or on your lap. Do this only when your baby is not sleeping: place a baby always sleeping on his back.

Your baby can also calm down by sucking, for example, on a pacifier, your clean finger or his own hand.

Get moving. Walking around the house, rocking on a rocking chair or a yoga ball, dancing quietly to music: many babies calm down

Of quiet movements or rocking. Walking outdoors can also work wonders.

Cuddle or comfort your baby in a dark, quiet room. Hopefully you also unwind in a peaceful environment.

Provide rest and regularity and fewer stimuli. A small baby receives stimuli, for example, from many (maternity) visitors, older children

Or lots of toys in the playpen. Reducing stimuli is always good for a restless baby.

Establish a rhythm and routine. By maintaining a rhythm, you give your baby a familiar feeling. You can do this, for example, by giving your baby

change in a fixed place according to a routine. Or before bedtime use the same routines, such as cradling first or

singing, hugging, covering and finally putting on a music.

What can you recognize colic by? Your baby is restless and makes a tense and convulsive impression. Sometimes you can clearly see or feel the tummy

move. Your baby may start suddenly after feeding or while sleeping to cry. Many babies pull their legs during a cramp attack

vigorously, flounder or ball their little fists. And you recognize intestinal cramps to crying in combination with pooping or farting. Although intestinal cramps

for your baby are obviously incredibly annoying, it is for mothers also intense to feel helpless when your little one is in pain, uncomfortable

feels or cries a lot. You have yet to discover what your baby needs and what soothes him or her. That takes time. It is perfectly normal

If you find your baby's occasional crying fits spicy.

Bonding with your baby

In the maternity period, there is often plenty of time to get to know your baby. To endlessly cuddling, admiring him or her, and becoming familiar with feedings,

baths and a sleep rhythm. Or rather, the total lack of a rhythm....

The first few weeks with your newborn baby are an important bonding phase.

Attachment is the emotional bond that develops between parent and child.

The very first attachment occurs during pregnancy and continues as soon as once the baby is with you or yours. Every baby born attaches

themselves to the one who cares for them. This is a biological mechanism.

From birth, your baby seeks closeness and protection from you and from

you as parents or caregivers. By taking the time together to give your newborn

getting to know you in the maternity period, you are laying the foundation for a happy, healthy baby.

Hormones in partners

After birth, an awful lot happens in your hormones. As pregnant woman or new mother you are not the only one who has a different composition of hormones into her body. Partners also make a change in hormone balance along with it. There is much more research needed into the action of hormones in (expectant) mothers and fathers. What scientists already know is that becoming a father has a big impact has on men. Not only mentally, but also physically: also *his* hormone balance changes when he becomes a father. Even before the birth of your baby.

The hormone oxytocin increases in women when they make contact with their baby, cuddling and having skin-to-skin contact. Oxytocin plays an important role in bonding with your baby. Oxytocin levels also increase in fathers. increase when they make contact with their baby, such as through eye contact, touches and the baby's scent.

Checklist

First aid for intestinal cramps

Some tips to ease cramps:

Comfort your baby by holding him or her with you, cradling him or her or carrying him or her around walk.

Massage your baby's tummy by making circular motions Around the navel, in a clockwise direction.

You can also gently make cycling movements with his legs, or the legs toward the intestines, allowing some air to escape.

Gently massage or pat your baby's back while he is on his tummy resting on your forearm. You can also hold your baby with the belly down place on your lap and gently massage his back. The pressure on the tummy gives relief.

Try holding your baby in a round position, for example by raising the knees slightly.

Warm your baby's tummy with a warm cloth. You can also put a warm cherry pit bag on the tummy, and preheat the bed. A warm bath can also help.

Aids for intestinal cramps are available at the drugstore, such as Infacol or Cinababy. There is no scientific evidence that these remedies work, although some mothers do notice after use that their baby seems to suffer less from intestinal cramps.

Try to let your baby drink slowly, with a pause or

a burp in between feedings. Allow your baby to burp after feeding.

When bottle feeding, pay attention to the correct teat and bottle and drip rate. Important is that your baby does not take in too much air. When breastfeeding, helping to feed lying down or reclining (semi-reclining).

If your baby cries a lot and you doubt your baby is healthy, consult with the consulting office or your family doctor.

Know that almost all babies have bowel cramps and through crying fits go. This is really about.

Exactly how this works, scientists do not yet know. In the meantime, however, it is clear that among partners who spend time with their baby and children, there are in addition to changes in hormones, changes also occur in the brain.

The more involved a partner is in caring for the baby, the more certain parts in his or her brain are activated. And these

changes in the brain in turn make fathers like mothers respond to a baby's cry or laughter, or hunger signals. Therefore, it is very important that your partner also spend a lot of time in the first few months with your baby, and involved in its upbringing and care.

And that means that as a (new) mother, you need to give your partner the opportunity

To find his or her own way. If you always jump up first when your baby cries, or if you prefer to do everything yourself, so it actually backfires.

The changes in the brain that make the father more caring become triggered precisely when he is more engaged with his child. So give your partner that space.

Fortunately, as of July 1, 2020, statutory birth leave for partners has been introduced.

As a partner, you can take up to five weeks of additional birth leave record, in the six months after the birth of your baby. As a result, you will get partners more opportunities to get to know their newborn baby, nurturing and bonding. That bonding forms an important basis for your baby's later mental and physical health.

Every woman is unique, and every woman has a unique, individual postpartum experience. Perhaps you suffer much more or less from certain symptoms

than your friend or sister-in-law. Still, it can be nice to be prepared
On what you may experience when it comes to your body after childbirth.

Blood loss

It is perfectly normal to have vaginal bleeding for up to six weeks after delivery to have, whether you gave birth vaginally or by cesarean section. This bleeding or flowing comes from the wound where the placenta enters your uterus. The bleeding should gradually diminish. The first few days you can't do without those big maternity bandages, which feel like you wear a rolled up towel between your legs. After that, you can usually switch to regular pads or panty liners. It is not recommended to wear tampons during the period you are bleeding, take a bath in go out or have sex, to avoid the risk of infection.

In addition to blood, you may also lose blood clots, a kind of wads of blood. These vary in color - bright red to dark brown - and size and you can quite a shock when there is a large clot in the toilet or shower. Is it blood clot you lose larger than the palm of your hand, please report it to your maternity nurse or midwife.

If you are breastfeeding, you may bleed noticeably more after feeding. Under influence of the hormone oxytocin, which plays an important role in the breastfeeding, the uterus contracts. When you can go back to more move after childbirth, it is possible that the blood loss may also be temporary some increases. However, blood loss should noticeably decrease.

Recovery of your vagina

Your vagina, anus and perineum - the area between your vagina and anus - have had a hard time during childbirth. During labor and the pushing, there is an enormous amount of force on your vagina. The area around Your vagina may feel sore, sore and swollen. Peeing or sitting upright can then be painful. Nine out of ten women have a scraped, torn or nicked vagina. Restoring the area around your vagina is a matter of time in most cases, and there are fortunately things that you can do to alleviate some of the symptoms.

The swelling in your vagina caused by squeezing is best counteracted by cooling. This can be done with an icepack or with a homemade cooling compress, such as through a bag of apple syrup or a wetted put sanitary napkins in a sandwich bag in the freezer. Keep such a cooling element not directly against your labia, but put a (hydrophilic) clean cloth around it. In the first few days after delivery, alternate lying down in bed versus sitting on a hard chair. That sounds uncomfortable, and it is it too, but it does help to counteract the swelling because this is the blood flow promotes.

Urination may be painful in the first few days: urine stings the swollen and scraped skin and sutures. Put a water bottle (with a nozzle) with water or cooled chamomile tea next to the toilet. This way, every time you pee, you can, Rinse your wound with water. Chamomile tea has a disinfecting and soothing operation. Then gently pat dry with a bit of toilet paper or a soft towel. Also, now you have a good reason to pee under the shower.

During the maternity weeks, make sure you regularly go into the hospital with your lower body bared.

bed so that your vagina and any sutures can air well. This Helps in the recovery of the wound area.

It may feel uncomfortable, but it helps to take a quick look in advance at how your vagina's condition after childbirth. Grab a mirror and look between your legs, or take a picture. Often it feels much worse than it is. Repeat after a day or three more times, then the recovery of your vagina is often evident. Is there

something you are unsure about, know that you can always check with your midwife or maternity nurse please.

Sutures

Try to thoroughly cleanse your vagina every time you take a shower. You need only use lukewarm water for this: avoid shower gels or special vaginal products.

If you've had stitches because of a cut or tear, you may be able to have a suture after a get a tight feeling for several days. Don't your stitches feel nice?

Please mention this to your midwife so she can check this for you. Basically sutures let go on their own; sometimes the midwife can tie a knot or Remove wire from suture earlier.

To prevent stiff scar tissue from sutures after a cut or tear, you can gently massage scars near or inside the vagina with a natural oil, for example *castor oil*.

Urination

After childbirth, you may not feel you need to urinate and losing urine as a result. The feeling of urgency comes during the first week after giving birth more and more return. It's normal to feel in those first suffer from slight leakage of urine for weeks, such as when you sneeze, laugh or jumps. Pelvic floor muscle exercises can help regain control of this. Urinary leakage should eventually pass. Do you have it

idea that the symptoms are not abating, then a visit to a pelvic floor physical therapist is a good idea.

In addition to urine leakage, the occasional fart may also escape. Even if you maternity visitors sitting next to you on the couch. Nothing to be embarrassed or worried about

about it. Not being able to hold up farts properly can be because your temporarily have poorer control of your sphincter muscles, the muscles around the anus, after childbirth. Often it is a matter of time before these muscles recover as well. Pelvic floor exercises help with this recovery.

Aftermath

In the first few days, you may experience aftereffects, especially while giving of breastfeeding. Those aftereffects have an important function: they provide cause the uterus to return to the size it was before pregnancy.

You can take paracetamol to relieve some of the pain: ask your midwife or maternity nurse for advice. A hot water bottle or hot shower may also help. Go pee before each breastfeeding: an empty bladder reduces aftereffects.

Thrust

Around day three to five after birth, your breasts become heavy and tense due to increased blood flow and initiation of milk production.

This phenomenon is called congestion. Congestion also occurs in women who have no breastfeeding. You can read more about what to do for congestion and sore breasts.

Hemorrhoids

You're definitely not waiting for it after childbirth, but it comes anyway regular occurrence: hemorrhoids. A hemorrhoid is a bulge on the inside of the anus, which may also be visible on the outside. Hemorrhoids can sometimes cause blood loss in stools.

Some women already suffer from this during pregnancy, others only after delivery. Because of the pressure on the anus during pushing, you can get hemorrhoids

get. Hemorrhoids, like swelling or stitches near your vagina, you can, cool with (homemade) ice compresses to relieve some of the pain.

Hemorrhoid ointment and tablets are available at the drugstore. Consult if you suffer a lot

have hemorrhoids with your obstetrician, maternity nurse or family doctor so that you can possibly get something prescribed. It sounds crazy, but also nasal spray can help reduce hemorrhoids because this spray has a vasoconstrictive action. Like it constricts the vessels in your nose and your colds stops, does this also work if you spray nasal spray on the hemorrhoids or this do for you. Getting enough fiber and drinking water are important To support your bowels and bowel movements.

Sweating

Under the influence of the hormones coursing through your body, you may sweat a lot. Even if you lie still in bed, in those first few weeks you may experience adolescent get sweat attacks. In fact, it is often worst at night and you can easily wake up with a soaked shirt. Don't worry:

Sweating is a well-known postpartum phenomenon and has an important function. Your body is working overtime in the postpartum period to get rid of of all the extra fluid that was retained during your pregnancy. Together with more sweating, you may also find that you have to urinate more often. Also that is your body's way of getting rid of the extra fluid.

Put an extra under sheet or flannel on your bed so you can put it in the wash do. It may be nice to wear a cotton camisole or shirt at night, rather than synthetics. And change nicely in the first few days or weeks of shirt whenever you want, even if it's four times a day. The washing machine runs overtime anyway with a newborn baby in the house.

Muscle pain

Throughout your body, you can have muscle pain after childbirth. You naturally a physical performance, so it's not surprising that your muscles react accordingly. Make sure you have good posture when lifting your baby and when feed. And the muscle soreness is a good reason in those first days and weeks to occasionally request a massage, or make an appointment at a massage parlor. You've earned it!

Breech and pelvis

Pelvic and back pain are common after childbirth. Another spot Where you may have pain after childbirth: your tailbone. The pain symptoms are located often occurs in and around the tailbone, sometimes it can even radiate to your lower back. The pain is there especially when sitting, but also when standing up or when there is pressure comes on. Do you feel that the pain does not gradually diminish? If so, visit a registered pelvic floor physical therapist to check your have a look. In addition to your tailbone, you may have symptoms of your pelvis after childbirth.

You may experience saddle pain, lower back pain, pain around your pubic bone or an unstable feeling in the pelvis. Some women describe feeling like there's a ball between their legs. Again, you prefer too early than too late have a pelvic floor physical therapist look in.

The first time to the toilet

Are you dreading the first time pooping after giving birth? You're not the only one. Rest assured that nothing can happen to your stitches, if any. It is quite normal that it takes a while for your bowel movements to get going again. If you feel an urge, try to go to the toilet immediately. Keep your stool not up: this can make defecation more difficult or cause constipation, resulting in abdominal pain, among other things.

Once you sit on the toilet, put your feet flat on the floor or on a stool and Relax as you exhale. Your back makes you slightly arch. As the stool does not come, calmly continue deep breathing toward your belly. Does pooping yet? Get up, try moving for ten minutes and then try it again. It is important that you do not press with force. If necessary, take take your phone or a book to the bathroom, so you shift your focus and your body can relax.

Drink a glass of water at the beginning of the day and ensure adequate fluid intake throughout the day. Drinking enough is important to avoid constipation or obstipation prevent. Also eat broken flaxseed, prunes and kiwi on a sober stomach can help restart your bowel movements.

Midwives also sometimes recommend a glass of Roosvicee Laxo for constipation of the intestines. A gentle abdominal massage can also help your bowels getting back on track.

The maternity nurse or midwife can give you advice if your stool doesn't get going. If you have had a total rupture, you may have prescribed laxatives to keep stools thin. Your maternity nurse and midwife see and talk about stool every day, so ask all your questions and share any concerns you may have. You don't have to worry about anything ashamed. Pooping we all do.

Whether it's hemorrhoids, sore breasts or stitches: don't be embarrassed to ask for advice or help from your maternity nurse or midwife. Know That you can also go to your doctor with questions. You don't have to be ashamed and certainly not to keep walking around with pain or other complaints.

Alarms

As a midwife, there are a number of alarm signals you should always pay close attention to watch out for. If you have any of the symptoms listed below, call your midwife immediately, maternity nurse, hospital or family doctor.

Fever: It is always important to be alert for fever in the maternity weeks.

Fever - a body temperature above 38.5 degrees - may indicate An infection, such as a breast infection. Also, an inflammation in the uterus caused by a bacterium or by a piece of residual placenta, a placental remnant.

Sore breasts: Be alert to signs such as a rise in your body temperature, a red sore on the chest associated with other flu symptoms such as muscle pain, fever and chills. This can indicate a breast infection.

Abdominal pain: You may still have a woeful feeling in your abdomen after delivery or suffer from aftereffects. If abdominal pain persists one week after delivery or worsen again, abdominal pain can also have other causes, such as a bladder infection, a retained placental remnant, bleeding or uterine infection.

Always contact your obstetrician, family doctor or hospital when there is pain in the lower abdomen or lower back, especially in combination With fever, abnormal vaginal bleeding or abnormal discharge.

Infection of the cesarean scar: Also pay close attention to the cesarean section wound.

Is the skin around the wound red, do you notice increasing pain around the scar or in your abdomen, do you have a fever or swollen skin around the scar? These may be signs of infection.

In the How About Mom app, you will find the Body feature.

The app makes it easy to find information

About ailments and complaints after childbirth. Click on the body part

Where you experience complaints or want more about

know, and you can instantly see which postpartum ailments are common

occur, what experts' advice is, and what you can do about it.

Also, the How About Mom app tells you when to call your obstetrician or family physician.

Few things are as profound as having a child. There will be moments

be where you are at three in the morning with sore breasts and a crying baby on your arm looking around you and thinking, I don't like being a mother.

You can be filled with pride when you go outside together for the first time

go. You can be in your pajamas at four in the afternoon, in an exploded house,

And wondering what you did that day in the first place. You may be madly in love

be when you see a smile for the first time. You can feel despondent feel if your baby is crying all night again because of tummy cramps. Your world is turned upside down for a while, or a little longer, when you've had a baby. Different emotions and experiences can alternate at a rapid pace. Fear, tension and uncertainty, alongside happiness, joy and relief.

Maternity Tears

The maternity nurse had so prepared you for it and yet it can still leave you overwhelmed: the maternity tears. Between the third and fifth day after giving birth very many new moms experience a period when they suffer from crying fits, sudden mood swings and gloomy feelings, also called maternity tears or baby blues.

Often on day three, four or five during maternity week, fatigue strikes toe. The adrenaline of childbirth is gone, your hormones are not yet balanced and you may experience congestion. All of a sudden you may feel That everything becomes too much for you for a moment. The fatigue, the sight of your sleeping baby or missing your partner (who is sitting in the living room while you're upstairs in bed) can all be prompts to *suddenly* fall into burst into tears. As soon as you start sobbing, it seems like your tears are unstoppable. Know then that this is normal and part of it.

Perhaps it would be nice not to receive any maternity visits these days, or receive only people in your home with whom you feel free to cry.

Air your heart and don't bottle up your feelings. Share what you are feeling with your partner, your

maternity nurse or your midwife. If you *don't* have maternity tears, then that's also perfectly normal. Plenty of women are spared this.

Mood swings

Due to the presence of the hormones estrogen and progesterone, combined with the fatigue, you may spend the first few days, weeks or months after experience different emotions during childbirth. You may be gloomy and tearful, Or, on the contrary, very happy and proud. These mood swings are normal and are caused in part by the cocktail of hormones in your body.

Changing moods are not only normal for you, but also for your partner. Give yourself time to get used to the new situation. Try the take necessary rest, such as by sleeping during the day, and ensure that the maternity visit does not overburden you.

(G)a pink cloud

Even after the baby blues in the maternity week, you can be somber as a new mother feelings experienced. This does not necessarily mean directly that there is more to the hand or that there is postpartum depression. Gloomy feelings belong to life, and also to your new life as a mother.

Perhaps motherhood is different than you expected and different than your always sees and hears from other moms. The reality is that motherhood is is spicy and challenging. Even if you and your little one are doing well, the there are times when you think, is this it? Let alone when childbirth was an unpleasant experience, your baby had a difficult start Whether breastfeeding won't work.

It is not always easy to come out in front of these feelings. It "should to be all great, right? Surely you only "hear" feelings in love for have your baby and be on a pink cloud? The answer is simple: no.

It is perfectly normal to experience peaks and valleys of emotions. More than 85 percent of mothers report experiencing that roller coaster after the arrival of their child. Realize that in addition to all the beautiful and loving emotions that come

involved in motherhood, there may and can also be room for other emotions. It would be great if we *finally* start talking more openly about that with each other.

If things go differently than expected

Sometimes a birth or maternity doesn't go the way you had hoped. There are all kinds of causes that can make your baby's start in this world more difficult, such as illness, violent childbirth or premature birth.

As a specialized maternal neonatal nurse at OLVG East in Amsterdam, Tamara de Langen regularly sees parents for whom the start with their newborn baby turns out differently than expected. For example, because the baby was born (much) prematurely, or because mother or baby received intensive care or need surgery. 'Emotions like pride, joy and a lot of love for your baby alternate with intense emotions such as fear, uncertainty, excitement or sadness. It can be difficult to allow those emotions all in and experience them side by side. Through the hospital, it is possible to work with talk to a psychologist or social worker, to help you or you as partners help to give a place to certain events and feelings, Tamara says.

A difficult start asks a lot of you as a parent. The birth or maternity period can be run differently because of problems with your health, childbirth, your baby's health or a combination of these things. Whatever the cause, a difficult start can be incredibly hard on parents. You may feel powerless, feeling guilty, angry or sad. "Why is this happening to me?" you may be thinking, and in the meantime, you do everything you can to take care of your baby as best you can. concerns.

Many parents forget to take care of themselves at that time. But know that you can't take good care of your baby if you don't take good care of yourself. The is not selfish to eat well, sleep when possible and rest to recover. Don't lose sight of yourself. Your baby will not benefit if you collapses.

It is okay to ask for help and accept help when people do so themselves offer. Even if you would like to solve everything on your own or not bother anyone. Your environment wants to help. So ask them for help. Help with housework, cooking, shopping, or babysitting for a night or weekend so you can charging. At the back of this book you will find a listing of websites and resources who may be able to help you, if the maternity or birth go differently than you had hoped or expected.

Maternal instinct sought

You are certainly not the first mother to doubt if and when finally That maternal instinct goes to work. Who felt so connected to the baby in her belly and then yet a tad alienated to the baby in the crib look. Some mothers immediately feel a deep connection with their new son or daughter, some mothers need more time to feel that maternal feeling experience. Some mothers immediately understand every cry, others mothers take longer to get to know their baby. Both are normal.

Not immediately in love?

Several factors play a role in "falling in love" with a newborn baby. Your personality plays a role, but also how the delivery has been, your hormones and how your baby is doing. The truth is that motherhood is probably the biggest change in your life. Give yourself time to get used to that.

When those feelings of love and protection are not immediately present, you may feel neutral, flat or jaded. You do the things you "should do, such as feeding, dressing and putting your baby to bed, but the overwhelming emotions that other women describe you don't recognize. You can have all kinds of feel other emotions, such as pride, amazement or relief, but that ver-love feeling still missing. Then try to remember that motherly feelings can develop, just like a crush. Perhaps you are at

instantly in love, maybe it takes a few weeks or months before you start to feel jitters in your belly.

What can you do to give your motherhood a helping hand? Hug as much as you can with your baby, caress her little hands, take in his face. Sniff the smell of your baby. During feedings, put away your phone or turn off the TV. Look at your drinking baby with full attention. Provide skin-to-skin contact: bare your upper body and that of the baby and warm his or her body to yours. All that physical contact enhances the production of the hormone oxytocin, which is important for bonding with your baby.

Have faith that things will work out, and know that there are many caregivers are who can help you if you can't figure it out on your own. Trust that you neutral or flat feeling changes. Perhaps after a first laugh from your baby, during a nighttime feeding or at the time when you are together for going outside for the first time. You may gradually experience a deep feeling Of love, connection and pride.

What happens when your baby is born via cesarean section? Cesarean section is abdominal surgery. You will be taken to the operating room (OR) for this. Through a horizontal cut of about fifteen centimeters flat above the pubic bone, the baby is taken out. In the process pushed your abdominal muscles aside, opened your abdominal cavity and loosened the bladder of the uterus.

After the baby is born and your abdomen is sutured, you go from the operating room to the recovery room, also called the recovery room or *recovery room*.

After a cesarean section, it can take about an hour and a half to two hours for you are back in your own room, although sometimes that is quicker. The first hours after birth, skin-to-skin contact is very important for your baby.

You can do this by laying the baby on your or your partner's bare chest. Tell the hospital staff that you would like this. Often they will suggest this themselves.

Special first moments

Many women enjoy looking back at photos or videos after giving birth.

In addition, it can be nice to take many pictures of the first hour or hours of the baby, especially if you missed certain moments. Your partner or the nursing staff you can ask to take pictures of all the times when you could not be present, such as weighing, your baby on your chest with your partner, or maybe even the first feeding. Many mothers find it very pleasant To be able to view these images afterwards. That way, it still feels like you have a been around a little bit.

Out of bed

On average, as a maternity mother, you stay in the hospital for three days after a cesarean section.

Your baby is with you as much as possible. Often your partner may spend a night stay overnight, but this varies by hospital. The first few days you will lie especially in bed. Should you be put under anesthesia, such as for a emergency C-section, you may still be a little shaky or nauseous. Often you will body feel out of sorts for a while after the hefty abdominal surgery you underwent.

The day after the C-section, you may already be able to walk and shower a little.

Then the bladder catheter can also be taken out. Make sure there is always someone in the neighborhood is when you get out of bed, in case you start to feel nauseous or dizzy.

Peeing can be sensitive at first, so try to relax and everything

to urinate out at once. Because you have a catheter in the hospital received, you have an increased risk of a bladder infection. Therefore, it is important to be alert to complaints such as pain during urination, always only being able to urinate small bits, or pain in your lower abdomen.

You will probably find that your bowels need some time to get going again.

In any case, keep your back arched and give some counter pressure with your hands if necessary

against your belly when you need to poop. Many women experience in the first few days after childbirth feel bloated and suffer from flatulence. That is nothing to be ashamed of, and can be an effect of the surgery.

Maternity care

At the intake interview with the maternity care organization of your choice, during your pregnancy, a provisional number of hours of maternity care was determined. In the maternity week, that number of hours may change. If you are in the maternity period with your baby

stay in the hospital, such as after a cesarean section, there are hours maternity care deducted. For each day in the hospital, you will receive six fewer hours of maternity care.

It's good to know this: if you get fewer days of maternity care, it may be nice to enlist extra help from friends, neighbors or family. How much hours of maternity care you are awarded depends on a number of factors, including the health of you and your baby, your family situation and whether there are complications with you or your child that require additional guidance. Your midwife and maternity nurse discuss this with you in the maternity week.

Breastfeeding

Fortunately, a cesarean section need not interfere with breastfeeding. stand, though it is good to take a few things into account. Do you want to Would you like to breastfeed? If so, please let the nurses know in the hospital. They can help you find a position where you can can feed comfortably, such as with your baby on a feeding pillow next to you. They can also help ensure that the baby is laid regularly.

The maternity nurse can also watch with you once you are home and helping you with breastfeeding. Do you experience pain when feeding or are unable to your baby properly, enlist the help of a lactation consultant in time. In the 'Breastfeeding' chapter you can read more about breastfeeding after a cesarean section.

Rest

One of the most important factors in recovery from a cesarean section is rest. It won't come easily to every mother, this taking it easy, but it is critical to your physical recovery. Avoid climbing stairs in those first few days and try as much as possible to care for your baby sitting down. Be sure not to strain your straight abdominal muscles for now, with this Among other things, you prevent the cesarean section scar from being too much under pressure comes. It takes about six weeks before you have your usual activities can do again. Note that these are averages. For each woman's recovery is different. The most important thing is that you give your body time gives to recover. So ask for help caring for your baby in the first few weeks, omit heavy housework for the next few weeks, don't exercise yet and slow down as soon as you notice that exertion is hurts or takes a lot of energy.

Scar

After the cesarean section, the scar in the skin may still be swollen, red and painful are. Gently massaging the scar on the skin increases the blood supply toward the scar. This makes the scar feel less painful.

It may be nice to support your belly and the scar with a pillow, or counter pressure to give when you have to cough or sneeze. After your cesarean section, you can still need painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Those painkillers you should taper off, depending on your symptoms. Ask your midwife or the maternity care for advice. After about six weeks you will come for a check-up with the gynecologist.

There your scar will be checked and your recovery discussed.

Emotional recovery

That your body needs special attention when recovering from a cesarean section isn't crazy, of course. The wound on your abdomen is very clear "evidence" that you've been through something intense and that you can't run at full speed yet. With all the focus on your physical recovery, it's easy to forget that you are sometimes also have to process mentally that you gave birth by cesarean section. Giving birth by cesarean section does not have to be an unpleasant experience by any means. Especially in the case of a planned C-section, as a woman you are often well informed of what is going to happen and you can prepare accordingly. On an unplanned C-section, with or without an emergency, you as a woman are sometimes less prepared.

Sometimes action must be taken quickly, and clear, good communication kicks in, or an exciting situation arises. Sometimes the result of a cesarean section that your baby cannot lie directly with you because he or she has extra needs support, you are not doing well with yourself, or because the policy is of the hospital is to quickly transfer the baby with partner to the maternity ward letting go. Women then often feel that they have important first moments have missed. You are additionally physically limited during the maternity, especially the first few days. Perhaps you had hoped, for example, to change the first diaper yourself but don't yet manage to do so, and have the feeling that you are missing some magical first moments. One, or a combination, of these causes can make you quite insecure or sad. Because this should be just such a beautiful time, you can also feel like About not being overjoyed.

Realize that it can and does take time to process childbirth. And realize That you are not the only one who has had an (un)planned cesarean section. Did you that about seventeen out of every hundred women in the Netherlands give birth with a cesarean section? In half of them it is planned, in the other half unplanned. You can be proud of yourself and your body, of what you have accomplished. You have not failed,

Your body has not failed you. You just got some help
At your fantastic achievement.

"So, how was it?" will probably be asked of you by family or friends during maternity visits. They allude to your delivery, that immense achievement you have made. You probably share your childbirth story first with your partner or other people close to you, such as your family members or your girlfriends.

The obstetrician or gynecologist who attended your delivery is also curious How you experienced your childbirth. Many women also like to the caregiver who was with them during this special event in their life again and reminisce about this special moment. During the home visit and the follow-up check in the hospital, there is time to talk about talk about your impressions and ask questions. It might be nice to here think about it ahead of time. Are there things you don't remember, or that were less pleasant? Giving your childbirth a place often goes better when you is not left with unanswered questions.

Three ways to look back

Childbirth is difficult to plan. When your delivery is different run than you had hoped, it may help to talk about this. Feel free to share your story as often as you like. Retrieving the memory is, in fact, a helpful way to process your childbirth. Or whether it was your ideal childbirth, an intense experience or an unpleasant experience been or a combination of all that: you may give yourself time to give your delivery process.

Perhaps photos or videos were taken during delivery. Check these back at a time when it feels right for you. Tip: this can also be done without

sound. It can be quite invasive to hear all the sounds of childbirth back hear. Who knows, maybe at a later time you'll be up for the images with sound to watch and to see yourself, your partner, the midwife, other caregivers Or hearing your baby's voice back for the first time.

In addition to talking about it and looking at pictures or videos, writing can also help with processing your birthing experience. Writing down your thoughts and emotions can help put some distance from the experience. Perhaps do you like to use a special booklet for it. Write as often and as much as what you feel comfortable with. You can also share your childbirth story online share, anonymously or not. Perhaps there are tips or advice you can give other mothers would like to impart.

A mix of emotions

While this is certainly not true for all women, you can have multiple, sometimes contradictory

feel emotions when it comes to your childbirth. Childbirth can be the have been the best day of your life because you had a beautiful, healthy son or daughter received, and in addition can also include a sense of failure, anger or evoke guilt. You can look back with pride, and at the same time be sad are about the course of your delivery. Although that mix of emotions is weird can feel, it's something many moms deal with.

Dare to share your emotions and feelings. Your partner, the maternity nurse or obstetrician can help you with this. Fighting the emotion and Hiding away feelings is like fighting against yourself. It is more intense and hurts more than feeling pain that is or can be there. Let your feelings toe, they may be there.

'It is not at all crazy if you are disappointed or sad that things are different walked out than you had hoped or planned. What is true for some women is That by knowing the numbers, it is sometimes easier to accept what has happened to you to see it as bad luck rather than failure.' So it helps if you have a realistic view have of giving birth, says gynecologist and researcher Claire Stramrood. 'My experience is that many women feel afterwards that they are the only ones who are couldn't do it without painkillers, in whom it became a cesarean section or who got help needed from the gynecologist with a vacuum pump. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Al

these procedures are common. Did you know that of the women who went from their first childbirth one in three opt for an epidural? And that one in six gets a C-section, and one in eight gets help with a vacuum pump?

Negative birthing experience

Also know that you are not the only one if you think back with negative feelings to childbirth. Did you know that about 10 to 20 percent of all Dutch women experience her childbirth as traumatic? And that 1 to 3 percent of all women even develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

Gynecologist Claire Stramrood and gynecologist-perinatologist Martine Hollander (Radboud UMC) conducted a large study in 2016 on traumatic childbirth experiences. This shows that it is often not the medical interventions are - such as an emergency cesarean section or delivery with a vacuum pump - causing women to look back on their childbirth. What troubles many women most afterwards is the lack of Of clear communication and emotional support during and after delivery, and lack of aftercare. So better explanations during childbirth, And feeling that you are being listened to.

We hope you will be able to place any feelings of guilt or failure.

Sometimes it takes several weeks, months or longer. Every woman processes a childbirth in her own way and at her own pace. If you recover slowly, you keep symptoms or look back on the delivery with a negative feeling, then it may be nice to speak with a professional. For this, we give you

some tips and tools in *When do you seek help?*

You now know that experiencing a roller coaster of emotions is part and parcel of maternity. That pink cloud that many women describe feels more like on some days gray or even black. In addition to the maternity tears that almost all mothers experience, or occasionally have a bad day, you may also suffer from gloominess and negative feelings. Are you often sad, anxious or gloomy? Or are you awake every night from your delivery? You may have a postpartum (postnatal) depression or need support in coping with the delivery.

Postpartum depression

Every year, some twenty thousand women develop the disease in the weeks or months after childbirth a postpartum (postnatal) depression. As such, it is the most common condition among new mothers.

What are signals that you need to keep an eye on? You have little (positive) feelings when seeing or caring for your baby, you have less pleasure in things you used to like, you mull a lot, including the feelings that you have for the baby or your own qualities as a mother. You feel guilty, you are easily agitated and, for example, can very badly stand the crying of the baby, you are constantly afraid that something will happen to the baby, or That you even do something to your baby, you feel listless and tired, but sleep doesn't work out, or you just sleep a lot and feel tense with no apparent reason.

Do you recognize yourself in these complaints? Do not brood and discuss it with your doctor or midwife. Often you see your loved one, family and friends especially be very happy with the baby, leaving no room for you to have this negative share feelings and (h)acknowledge that it is is not all fun.

The loneliness you may experience as a new mother can make your depressed reinforce complaints. Precisely because this can be so isolating, it is of great importance that you or those around you, raise the alarm in a timely manner if you suspect that

you are struggling with postpartum depression. It is important to realize That you did nothing wrong. You are not to blame if you have a postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression is usually treatable. Depending of your symptoms and wishes, a possible treatment can be considered. This can be done with conversations with the mental health practitioner (geestelijke health care) of the general practice, treatment with a psychologist, medications or a combination of talks and medications.

Processing your childbirth

If you find yourself thinking back on your delivery with negative feelings, you can you do a number of things. Often it helps if you can tell your story and have a find a listening ear for your experience with your partner, family or friends. It is also important to discuss with your obstetrician or gynecologist your delivery after to discuss. You may still be left with questions, or anger or sadness, Or worry about a possible next delivery.

Do you feel that after a while you still have little or no connection feel with your baby? Or do you find it difficult to become intimate again with your partner because sexual contact reminds you of (problems or interventions at) childbirth? If so, it is important that you share these feelings, even though you may be ashamed of this. For example, with your partner, with the obstetrician or your family doctor.

If you have psychological symptoms that limit you in your daily life, then it is important to seek help. See your doctor and tell him or her where you are suffering from of and what symptoms you are walking around with. The general practitioner can refer you to the primary care physician's office assistant, specialized

in mental health, or a psychologist. There are also psychology practices especially for women who have experienced an unpleasant or traumatic childbirth have had.

Traumatic childbirth

About 10 to 20 percent of all Dutch women experience her childbirth as traumatic. Of all women who give birth annually, 1 to 3 percent develop even post-traumatic stress disorder. In a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) you experience a traumatic event that you don't processed properly, which can lead to physical and psychological symptoms. How do you recognize trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder? You can PTSD symptoms recognize symptoms from one or more of these four categories:

- Reliving the trauma: you may suffer from nightmares or flashbacks related to the traumatic experience, physical reactions or intense emotions when something reminds you of the trauma. You can for example, not sleeping (well) because you keep having the unpleasant images in front of you sees.

- Avoiding stimuli associated with the trauma: you find yourself zapping away When something on TV reminds you of childbirth, you can't go to watching pictures of childbirth, or not even daring to get pregnant again.

- Negative thoughts and mood: you are often gloomy, anxious, or feel your guilty.

- Increased irritability: you get angry easily, startle easily, or have concentration issues and sleep problems. You sleep badly, not because of the baby, but By your own thoughts.

It may be that you recognize one of the above complaints or also sometimes experienced. This is not immediate cause for panic. Childbirth is for almost all mothers an intense experience that you have to find a place for. That may take time.

When do you raise the alarm? If the symptoms you are experiencing interfere with your daily life

limit, then it is important to seek help. The follow-up check at the obstetrician or gynecologist - about six weeks after delivery - is a moment to share your experience and ask your questions. Or visit your doctor and tell what is bothering you and what symptoms you are walking around with. If there appears to be PTSD, the good news is that there are good treatments for it. Through your primary care physician, you may be referred to a psychologist. There are also psychology practices specifically for women Who have had an unpleasant or traumatic delivery and have PTSD symptoms developed.

The most effective treatments are EMDR (*eye movement desensitization and reprocessing*) and CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy). In particular For EMDR, a few of these sessions are often sufficient to overcome the post-traumatic stress disorder and heal the trauma.

A difficult start

A hospital stay, an operation for you or for your baby, an intense childbirth, An inherited condition or disease. The causes may vary be, but one thing is for sure: a difficult start can have a lot of impact on your life as a brand-new mother.

A difficult start can be incredibly hard on parents. You worry, and may feel powerless, guilty, angry or sad. Those emotions may be there. If you have had a difficult start to your maternity period due to health concerns with you or with your baby, it may be nice to have someone there with talking about it. Realize that a difficult start requires even more of you during the maternity weeks, a period that is intense anyway, even with a core healthy baby. You don't have to do it alone.